

There is no doubt that all material broadcast on public airwaves is to some degree biased, but, unlike completely user-driven media such as newspapers, internet, or cable television, mainstream free-of-charge public access broadcasters should be held to stringent standards for balanced reporting and representation of the multiple and contradictory viewpoints of our varied democratic society.

Large broadcasting conglomerates like Sinclair Broadcasting have a huge responsibility to maintain this high standard, and outside of clearly labeled paid commercials (which have restrictions in length and content already) THEY SHOULD BE EXPLICITLY PREVENTED from broadcasting programming that disguises itself as investigative reporting in the service of right-wing, conservative initiatives.

It is clear to me that Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry "documentary" days before the election is one of many perfect recent examples of the dangers of media consolidation and abuse. In fact it's completely deplorable and un-American if the FCC allows this travesty to continue unchecked.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, the public is fed more of what interests big business than what we need for our democracy. Allowing massive media enterprises to manipulate local media, thereby manipulating the American public, a vast majority of whom are not exposed to any other form of media than public-access television and radio, is a tragedy of the worst kind.

Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter--not only in the United States, but globally as well.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.